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No. 104

## House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIREs).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

June 26, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ALBIO SIREs to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debate. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

### PLIGHT OF IRAQI REFUGEES

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this last week I had the opportunity to meet a true American hero in Iraq, Kirk W. Johnson. No matter what your position on the war in Iraq, how it started, where it's going, how it will end up, you should be deeply concerned by the 4 million Iraqis who have been forced to flee their homes. And you cannot help but be impressed by Mr. Johnson and his deep concern for their plight.

This young Arabist, who worked for the USAID as regional coordinator on reconstruction in Fallujah—from, I might add, impeccable Republican lineage—figured prominently in George Packer's haunting essay in *The New Yorker* on March 26 of this year. That essay, entitled "Betrayed: The Iraqis Who Trusted America the Most," had a profound impact on me. It is a harsh title, but the facts are harsh. In a country with a population about the size of Texas, 4 million Iraqis have been forced to flee their homes. Two million are currently outside the country, primarily in Jordan and Syria where there are jarring press accounts, for instance, of women forced into prostitution to feed their families in Syria. Mr. Johnson has been focusing on a special subset of these unfortunate people, people whose lives are at risk because they helped the United States, translators, guides, people who worked on the reconstruction effort. He has compiled a list of over 500 Iraqis that he knows personally are in that category. Five hundred, not one of whom has been able to yet make it to the United States for asylum. They are part of the tip of the refugee iceberg. Two million, as I say, in Jordan and Syria.

Mr. Johnson asks the question that each Member of Congress must confront: What kind of superpower can't convert its "very top priority"—the words, by the way, of Ellen Sauerbrey, the Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration in her testimony before the United States Senate—can't convert its very top priority into a program that starts saving the lives of people who helped us before their visas expire?

The stark reality is that only 70 Iraqis since October of last year have been admitted to the United States. Only eight in March, one in April and another in May.

I strongly urge that my colleagues join me in supporting H.R. 2265. This

comprehensive refugee legislation will allow for more Iraqis to be granted refugee status in the United States. Why should the United States accept fewer refugees than Sweden? It would allow them to apply for refugee status in Iraq. Why should they be forced to flee the country, to Jordan, for instance, when we have the largest embassy in the world in Baghdad? This legislation would put somebody in charge, having a special coordinator to help us make sure that this problem is solved. I strongly urge my colleagues to make sure that Congress does its part to deal with the greatest continuing refugee crisis in the world with the possible exception of the Darfur. This is a crisis for which the United States has a unique responsibility and a unique role in its solution.

Please examine H.R. 2265, add your name as cosponsor, but, more important, join Mr. Kirk Johnson in making the plight of these millions of unfortunate people, especially those who helped us, part of your mission in Congress.

### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 7 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN) at 10 a.m.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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